

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

Suit against Richland County School District One

I was standing in the faculty lunch line at AC Flora High School in the fall of 1972. A man teacher, whom I had known and worked with for years, was behind me in line and asked me if I would do him a favor "since you don't mind calling them down at Central Office, and they make me nervous," he said. I didn't mind calling them, I was president-elect of the Richland County Education Association, and I didn't mind adding to my reputation as an agitator.

"I'm not getting my extra pay as a male teacher," he said.

"You're not supposed to be getting it," I said; "*they* say that the extra pay for men has been stopped."

"Well, I've been getting it until this year," he said. Then he realized that he had told the wrong person, but I was determined to call for him, and I did. He was still getting his male pay, or *stud fee*, as we began calling it. What he wasn't getting was a salary increment, which he was entitled to. The extra pay had been stopped for new male employees but not for those who had been receiving it.

That conversation resulted in a complaint to the South Carolina Labor Department and a warning to Richland County School District One. When the warning was ignored, the Richland County Education Association, with the legal support of The South Carolina Education Association and the National Education Association's United Services Program, filed suit against Richland County School District One. The suit was settled out of court several years later for what was, at that time, the largest settlement in the history of the Equal Pay Act.

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